Missouri State Rehabilitation Council For the Blind

Annual Report 2003

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MISSION STATEMENT

TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELIGIBLE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE SO THAT THEY MAY ATTAIN PERSONAL AND VOCATIONAL SUCCESS.

.....We believe that with appropriate services and reasonable accommodations blind persons will be able to achieve maximum potential in the home and community, in educational settings and in employment. This is accomplished through remediation, accommodation, and compensation of barriers and limitations imposed upon people who are blind and visually impaired.....

Services Under the Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) provides a variety of services to eligible individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The focus of service is successful competitive employment so that the consumer is able to live independently and become or remain a contributing member of society. Services which will lead to employment may include:

Evaluation and Diagnostic Services: The vocational rehabilitation counselor and the consumer work together to identify the applicant's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests, then an appropriate employment goal is selected and Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) services are planned that will result in successful competitive employment.

Counseling and Guidance Services: The counselor-consumer relationship is important to the success of the rehabilitation plan and includes personal adjustment counseling as well as vocational guidance. Referral to other agencies and programs may aid the consumer in exercising informed choice in obtaining the services needed for rehabilitation.

Physical and Mental Restoration Services: These services may be provided to correct or modify a stable or slowly progressing physical or mental condition that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment. Restoration services include surgery and treatment, prosthetic and orthotic appliances, hospital and convalescent care, and other restoration services.

Vocational and Other Training Services: These may include personal and vocational adjustment training, vocational skills

training, and academic training with provision of books, tools, and other materials. Vocational training is based upon the selection of an employment goal consistent with the individual's capacities and abilities. Training may also include on-the-job training as well as work adjustment training.

Rehabilitation Technology Services: The application of technologies, engineering methodologies, and scientific principles to meet the needs and address the barriers confronted by individuals with handicaps in areas which include education, rehabilitation, employment, transportation, independent living and recreation.

Job Placement Services: These services assist the consumer in locating adequate and suitable employment in his/her career choice.

Supported Employment Services: This is competitive work in an integrated setting with ongoing support services for any severely handicapped consumer for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred or whose competitive employment has been interrupted as a result of his/her severe handicap.

Transition Services: These are services which are needed to promote the consumer's movement from school to post-secondary education, vocational training or suitable employment. Such services are provided in cooperation with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Missouri School for the Blind and local education agencies.

Small Business Enterprise Services: Through the Business Enterprise Program, RSB establishes small business enterprises that are operated by individuals who are blind or visually impaired and have received vocational rehabilitation services. RSB

provides management services and supervision to the operators of the small business enterprises.

Post-Employment Services: Once successful competitive employment has been achieved and RSB services have been terminated, additional short-term services may be provided to address any continuing needs to ensure that employment is maintained.

Support Services: RSB provides a number of services which enable the consumer to benefit and participate in the rehabilitation plan:

Interpreter Services	Transportation
Reader Services	Maintenance
Services to Employers	Tools and Equipment

Occupation Licenses

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program

During the fiscal year 2003, 1,743 persons received vocational rehabilitation services, and 235 consumers were successfully employed in gainful work.

In the Vocational Rehabilitation program such services as: supported employment services, short-term community employment services, and self-employment services can be provided.

Missouri's Rehabilitation Services for the Blind is the sole state agency authorized by both federal and state statutes with helping and empowering individuals with blindness or visual impairments in order that they may prepare for and engage in gainful employment that is consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest, and informed choice. The goal is to enable individuals with visual disabilities to become economically and socially self-sufficient and taxpaying members of society. The benefits for Missouri and the nation include: reduced dependence on public assistance, increased earning spent in Missouri, and increased tax revenue.

Eligibility for VR Services:

Eligibility for RSB's vocational program is based on the presence of a physical or mental disability(ies) which for that individual, constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment and the individual meets the visual disability requirement of RSB.

1. Visual disability means that an individual with a nonprogressive eye disease has a central visual acuity of twenty/two hundred (20/200) or less in the better eye with best correction; or, if the central visual acuity with best correction is not more than twenty/two hundred (20/200) in the better eye, there is a visual field defect in which the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle distance no greater than twenty degrees (20E); or has a visual efficiency that does not exceed twenty percent (20%)

2. Visual disability means that an individual with a progressive eye disease has a central visual acuity of twenty/seventy (20/70) or worse in the better eye with best correction; or has a visual efficiency that does not exceed sixty-four percent (64%); or has near vision that is decreased to the extent that the individual cannot read print that is smaller than Jaegar nine (J9) with best correction.

The individual requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest, and informed choice.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

During the fiscal year 2003, 49 blind Missourians received training and services through RSB's Business Enterprise Program. The Business Enterprise Program currently operates 57 facilities throughout the State, ranging from subcontracted vending facilities, convenience stores, gift shops, cafes and full service cafeterias that could rival any restaurant.

Under the direction of the Missouri Department of Social Services' Division of Family Services (DFS), the Randolph-Sheppard Program is administered by Rehabilitation Services for the Blind's Business Enterprise Program. Lion's Business Opportunities for Missouri Blind, Inc., a private, not-for-profit corporation, acts as an agent for DFS in the provision of management services and fund administration.

The Randolph-Sheppard Act, signed into law June 30, 1936 by President Franklin Roosevelt, mandates that priority be given to legally blind individuals in the operation of vending facilities existing or to be developed on federally owned, leased, or occupied property. It is the goal of the BEP to assist persons who are blind or visually impaired to achieve success as self-employed businesspersons.

Successful People

The purpose of RSB is to provide comprehensive services to Missourians who are blind or visually impaired, that will maximize their quality of life and economic self-sufficiency in their communities. RSB promotes equality, empowerment and productive independence.

During 2003 RSB consumers obtained employment in several major classifications in various industries. Approximately 94 consumers found employment opportunities within the technical, professional and managerial categories. The BEP Facility Managers add an additional 12 positions to that number. Twenty (20) consumers have jobs in sales of products and services. Education providers are among one of the most sought after employee. RSB consumers have aided this demand by assisting 18 consumers reach their goal of teacher. Service occupations offer a wide variety of employment options. It is because of great demand in this industry that twenty-one (21) RSB consumers are successfully employed. Six (6) consumers obtained positions in the field of agriculture. Self-employment in various occupations has become an increasingly popular option for trained and skilled workers that seek non-traditional work environments. In 2003, fifty two (52) RSB consumers have embraced the entrepreneurial spirit of self-employment.

Studies have shown that 2 out of 3 people with disabilities would rather be working and be self-sufficient. RSB provides services that enable Missourians who are blind or visually impaired to become productive members of society, increasing each consumer's income potential. This income will be used to stimulate Missouri's economy through consumer spending and tax contributions. Additionally, by putting consumers who are blind or visually impaired to work, public spending is reduced.

RSB assisted 235 individuals obtain competitive employment during fiscal year 2003. With the assistance of RSB, successfully employed consumers who are blind and visually impaired earned a total of

$4,616,836. If a tax rate of 20% existed, this group of consumers would repay the cost of their rehabilitation in less than three years.

Children's Services and Transition

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind provides services for children ages birth to 14 years to assist in their growth, education and development. Children's services include: casework and counseling services to assist the family in maximizing the child's potential and minimizing the impact of blindness, parent education on how to stimulate blind or visually impaired children and how to enhance independent living skills, advocacy services for blind or visually impaired children and their families, per request of family or school attend Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings to help identify children's needs and how to meet those needs, referral and resource information to schools and families regarding vision loss issues.

During fiscal 2003, 352 Missouri children from birth to 14 received services. Currently a federal mandate for the provision of transition services insures that educational entities and state VR agencies begin to address transition issues by identifying the services needed to help blind youth progress to independent adulthood. These services can begin as early as age 14. RSB staff provides services to children 14 and older in a Vocational Rehabilitation transition program to help students prepare for the transition from school to post-secondary education or work.

Prevention of Blindness Program (POB)

During the fiscal year 2003, 7,084 Missourians received services through Rehabilitation Services for the Blind's Prevention of Blindness program. Treatment services provided funding for eye care to 664 Missourians. Twelve (12) clinics provided full eye screening to 974 Missourians and 77 glaucoma screening clinics served 5,446 Missourians.

The Prevention of Blindness program (POB) is a statewide program to provide individuals of all ages with a resource in securing medical treatment for diseases or malfunctions of the eye. Eligibility is based on visual and financial factors.

Visual eligibility for the POB program is present when:

1. Visual acuity is 20/200 or worse in one or both eyes (without correction)
2. Malformation of the eye; i.e. ptosis, something that can be corrected with surgery and is sight threatening.
3. Malfunction of the eye (strabismus, glaucoma etc.)
4. Progressive eye disease; i.e. cataracts, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, etc.
5. Trauma to the eye, even though damage or acuity has not been determined.

Financial eligibility is based on the net monthly income available to the household in which the applicant resides.

Older Blind Services Program (OBS)

Missouri has a significant older population who are blind or visually impaired. One hundred and twenty three thousand (123,000) age 55+ Missourians have a severe visual impairment. This is about 11% of the total age 55+ population (U.S. Census figures, 1997).

The leading causes of blindness in this age group are: 1) macular degeneration (loss of central vision), 2) glaucoma (pressure buildup inside the eye), 3) diabetic retinopathy, and 4) cataracts (clouded lens, glare and focus problems).

During the fiscal year 2003, 1,844 older Missourians who are blind and visually impaired received individualized and group independent living services through the provision of training in the necessary life skills and adaptive equipment.

Through the Older Blind Services program, RSB provides alternative techniques, skills, and services to the state's older individuals (55 +), who are blind or visually impaired. RSB believes that with the proper training and alternative skill and techniques, and with the assistance of appropriate adaptive equipment, Missouri's seniors who are blind or visually impaired can be productive and live independently in their own homes and communities.

OBS maintains about 80 low vision centers around the state (number and locations fluctuate) where OBS consumers can come to learn about and borrow magnifiers that are located in senior centers, nutrition sites, independent living centers and libraries.

OBS also sponsors support groups for older individuals who are blind or visually impaired in most of RSB's service areas. Since 1994, RSB rehabilitation teachers facilitated the establishment of 32 support groups.

OBS also conducts 7 informational town meetings each year, usually at senior centers around the state. Information such as eye diseases affecting older blind, RSB services, OBS program, Wolfner Library services, and state senior services are disseminated at these meetings. Three hundred fifty four (354) consumers attended town meetings last year.

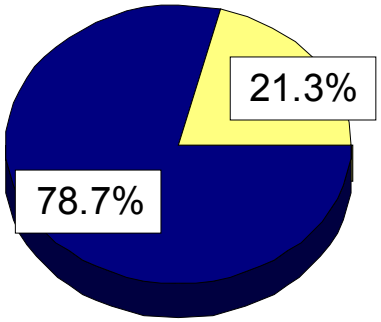
Independent Living Rehabilitation (ILR) Program

Rehabilitation Services for the Blind provides services to eligible blind and visually impaired people so that they can function independently in their homes and communities. Services include the following:

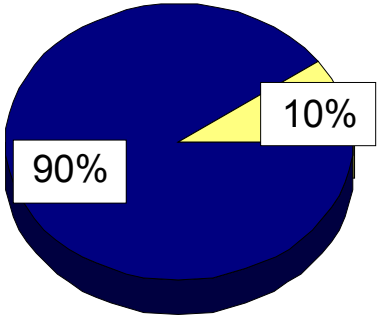
- Adaptive techniques in such homemaking activities as cooking, sewing, and housecleaning
- Communication skills (reading and writing including Braille)
- Instruction in the use of the white cane for safe travel
- Counseling adjustment to vision loss.

RSB FUNDING

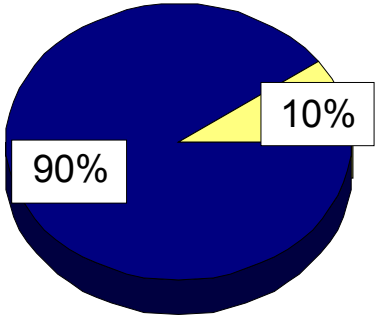
VR PROGRAM



ILR PROGRAM



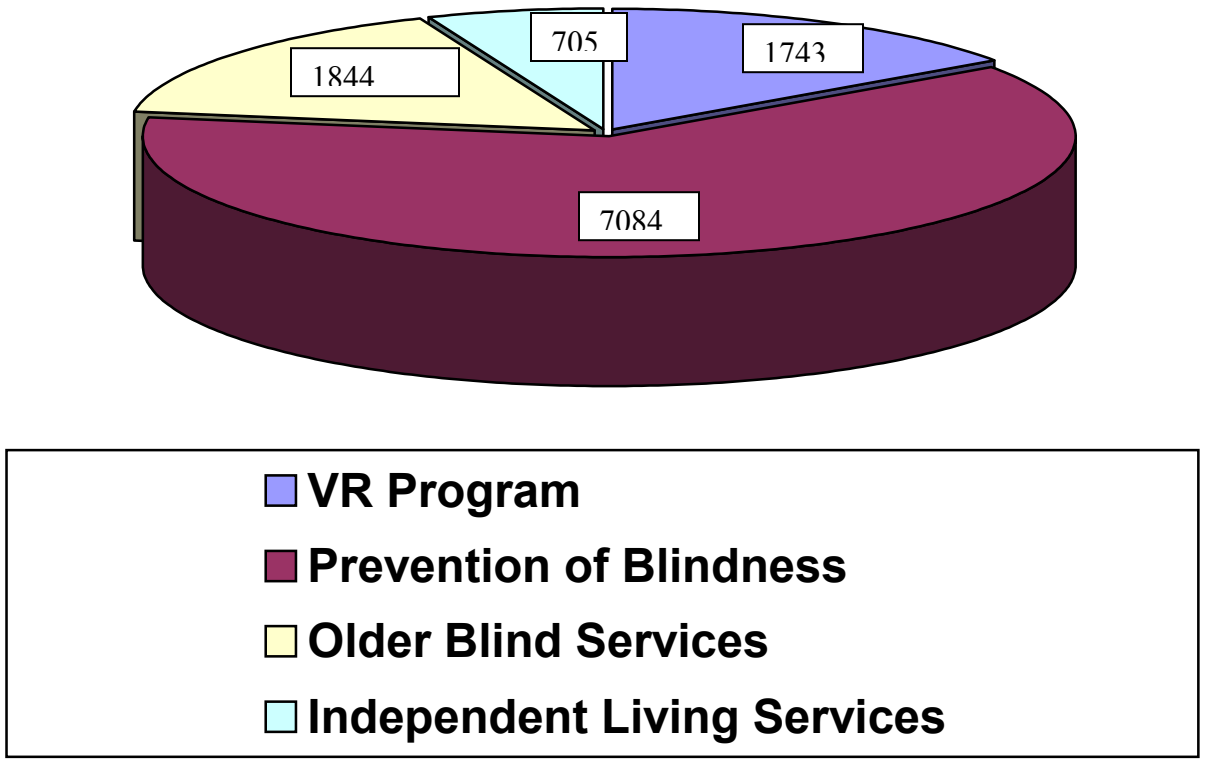
OBS PROGRAM



STATE FEDERAL

RSB 2003

CONSUMERS SERVED BY PROGRAM TYPE

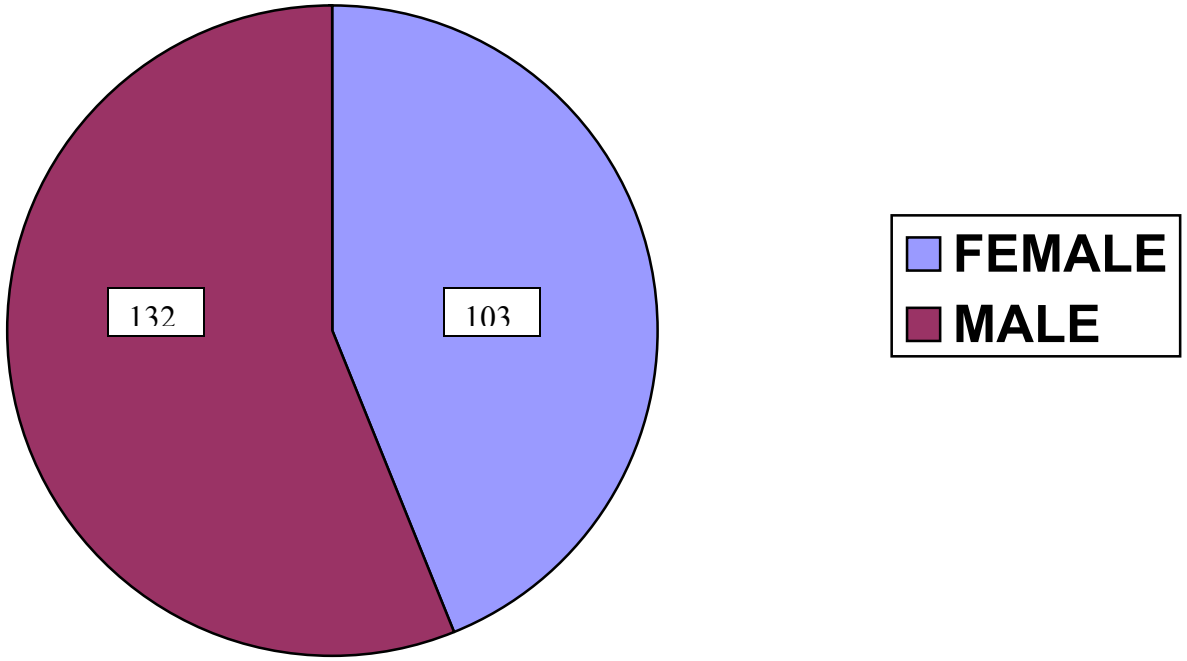


RSB VR PROGRAM STATISTICS

TOTAL NUMBER OF VR CONSUMERS SERVED

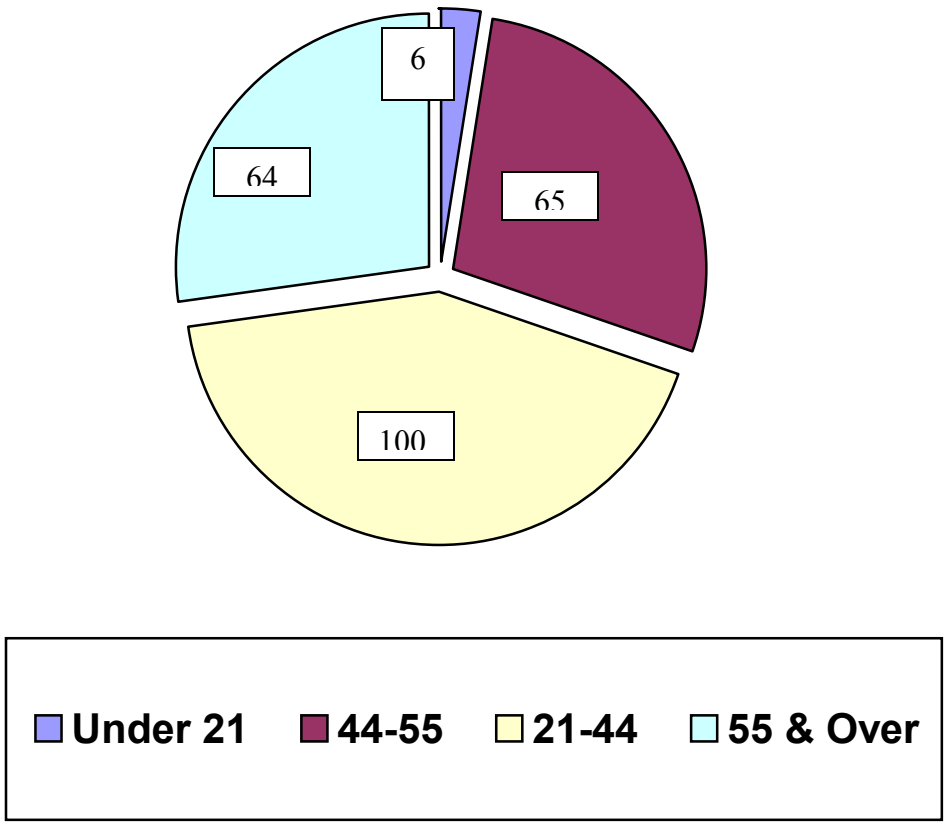
RSB 2003

COMPETITIVELY EMPLOYED BY GENDER



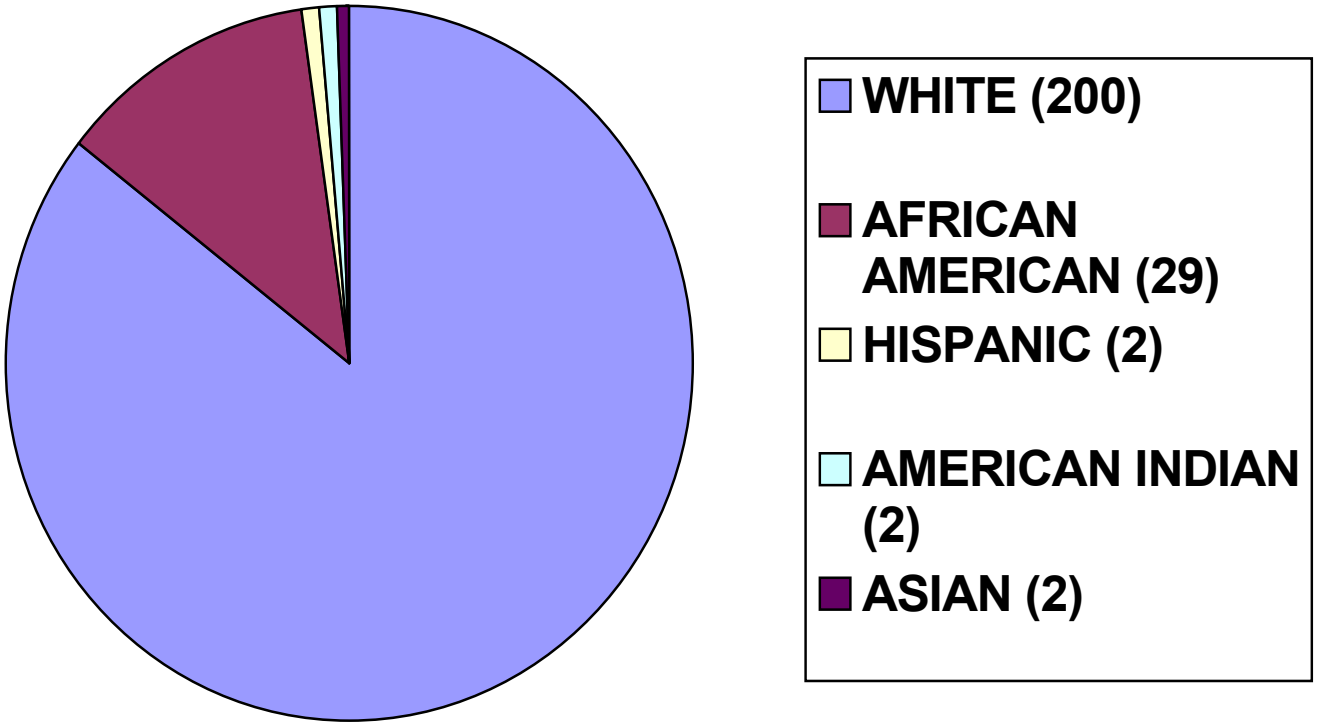
RSB BY AGE

COMPETITIVELY EMPLOYED CONSUMERS



RSB 2003

COMPETITIVELY EMPLOYED BY ETHNICITY



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